
**MINUTES
HUMAN RELATIONS COMMISSION
REGULAR MEETING
Monday, December 14, 2009
5:00 p.m.
Human Resources
Pinnacle Training Room
7575 E. Main Street
Scottsdale, Arizona**



PRESENT: Linda Simmons, Chair
Susan Galpin, Vice Chair
Bob Fox, Commissioner
Jeff Jameson, Commissioner
Kuros Lamé, Commissioner
Edward Lopez, Commissioner

ABSENT: Joel Martin, Commissioner

STAFF: Linda Walton, Staff Liaison

GUESTS: Melissa Medvin, ADL Education Director
Miriam Weisman, ADL

1. **Call to Order**

Chair Simmons called the meeting of the Scottsdale Human Relations Commission to order at 5:11 p.m.

2. **Review and Approval of Minutes**

COMMISSIONER FOX MOVED TO APPROVE THE MINUTES OF THE NOVEMBER 9, 2009 REGULAR MEETING. COMMISSIONER JAMESON SECONDED. THE MOTION CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY BY A VOTE OF SIX (6) TO ZERO (0).

3. **Outreach to the Scottsdale Schools on Human Relations Issues**

Ms. Walton said the Anti-Defamation League (ADL) was invited to provide background information on human relations education in the schools.

Ms. Medvin said the ADL offers anti-bias education through its "World of Difference Program." Training is available for teachers K-12 and students from middle school through high school. Programs are tailored to meet the needs of the groups receiving training. The ADL approached the Scottsdale Unified School District (SUSD) with a proposal in 2005. Local law firms had

expressed concern that they were challenged to attract diversity to their firms because of the perception that the area was neither diverse nor accepting. The firms pooled \$15,000 to fund an effort to address diversity issues in the schools. These funds were used to train teachers in 2006. Even though the classes could accommodate 15 to 40 students per site, the coordinators were unable to recruit enough students. Parents were generally unwilling to give up the necessary three days of class time. Training was subsequently offered on weekends, but only eight students participated. Participation in the ADL's programs in other Valley communities was much higher.

Ms. Weisman said in order for the program to be successful, there has to be support from the on-site coordinators. Chair Simmons said that in reality many parents do not want their children missing school, even for valuable activities, because there is so much pressure for high school students to excel. The Commission discussed why Scottsdale's results differed from other Valley communities. Ms. Weisman felt that the primary reason was due to resistance from the school administration, who felt the program was not a priority. Vice Chair Galpin proposed that the program be tied into a sociology class. Ms. Weisman said the program allows teachers to incorporate the training into almost any type of class.

Commissioner Fox felt that until an influential champion is found, it would be difficult to create the environment necessary for the program to succeed. A champion will convince teachers and other administrators of its value. Once parents realize that their children will receive an advantage, they will want to participate. Commissioner Lamé suggested writing a letter to the social studies and history departments at each high school, instead of relying on the administration. Chair Simmons suggested approaching the School Board directly. Commissioner Jameson surmised that recent changes in the administration might make it easier to find someone who recognizes the program's value. Once students start getting the message, they will bring it back home to their parents.

Ms. Medvin noted that another challenge is that many schools face a lack of funding. The grant money from the lawyers' initiative has dried up. Ms. Weisman noted that the programs on early childhood and cyber bullying are free, however. Chair Simmons said the Commission would consider the information and formulate a plan of action.

4. Debrief of the Regional HRC Meeting Hosted by Scottsdale

Ms. Walton reported that Dr. McMillan facilitated the discussion at the Regional HRC meeting and proposed a vision statement. Commissioner Jameson said the group left the meeting with a commitment to continue the conversation at the next regional meeting. He felt Dr. McMillan did a great job at facilitating, despite feeling ill. Vice Chair Galpin said the attendees were successfully refocused on the broader topic of diversity whenever the discussion began to stray towards particular issues. In response to an inquiry from Chair Simmons, she clarified that while the Regional HRC should focus on particular diverse issues eventually, this meeting was an attempt to get the group to come together to find the best way to move forward. She expressed concern that some individuals were passionate about their own causes, but were reluctant to work on the unifying exercises. Ms. Walton invited revisions to the meeting notes.

Commissioner Jameson discussed his meeting with the Valley of the Sun Human Resources Association, which expressed interest in drawing attention to the various Human Relations Commissions in the Valley, and the resources they can provide to HR professionals.

5. **Cross Cultural Communication Series**

Ms. Walton provided an update on the Series activities. There have been two sessions thus far, one on *What's Cooking*, and the other on *The Woman in the Bubble*. Attendance figures have been similar to what they were prior to last year. Commissioners attended both events. Evaluations indicate that the events have been well received. The promotion efforts have matched those in the past. One idea is to use email to remind people about upcoming events just prior to the sessions.

Chair Simmons said she wished there was more energy surrounding the series. The people who attend receive so much from it. Ms. Walton said the sentiment has been that even when numbers are small, a contribution is still made to the community. Commissioner Jameson proposed finding a sponsor to underwrite advertisements in the movie section of the newspaper. The films themselves are art, and it might draw new audiences to the series.

6. **Scottsdale Latin Jazz Festival/Hispanic Heritage Community Celebration**

Commissioner Lopez reported that Saturday attendance at the festival was slower than expected, whereas Sunday's was on point. He felt the \$10 charge was likely the main contributor to lower numbers. The educational aspects were valuable to both adults and children.

Ms. Walton said the HHCC organizers are still evaluating the event, and will meet with the Scottsdale Performing Arts group on December 16. The attendance figures were very low on Friday night, though the cold weather may have contributed. The Arturo Sandoval concert on Saturday night was sold out, however. There were many other conflicting events during the daytime on Saturday, which possibly hurt attendance. The event might move to the first weekend of November next year. The two stages might also be blended together better. The vendors did not make any money this year. Next year they might be located more centrally to increase foot traffic. Chair Simmons said there is a science to positioning vendors and stages for events. She proposed contacting the Phoenix Zoo for tips on how to arrange successful traffic patterns, as they do for the Zoofari event.

Ms. Walton said the general impression was that the HHCC was a subset of the jazz festival. The marketing focused primarily on the musical aspects of the event, while the cultural aspects were somewhat curtailed. Commissioner Lopez suggested better coordination of giveaways, noting that he walked out with seven different recyclable bags.

7. **Chair Reports**

Chair Simmons noted that a volunteer group drew inspiration from the meeting minutes, and is working to make music a vibrant experience for children. The group consists of teachers who are interested in teaching music, which is no longer available in the schools. Chair Simmons said she was invited to make opening remarks at one of their recent youth concerts, and used the opportunity to discuss diversity, and the work of the Commission. The orchestra's membership is very diverse. The group leader has offered to help the Commission in any way possible with the Scottsdale Unified School District.

8. **Commissioner Items**

Commissioner Lopez noted that the Unity Walk is coming up on February 6, 2010. The Chandler High School Gospel Choir is lined up to sing during the walk, and to give a post walk concert. A drum and bugle corps has been arranged. The Phoenix Suns Gorilla, the Cardinals' mascot, and Sparky the Sun Devil will also be there. The featured speaker is Alonzo Jones, and the mayors of each participating city are invited to speak. Scottsdale has been charged with arranging entertainment. The promotion effort will include water bill notices, and organizers are working with employers to give wellness point credits for the walk. Key groups will be identified using banners. One outstanding issue is return transportation to starting points. In addition to buses, water taxis might be a possibility.

Commissioner Lopez said the events he attended in the past month have been enjoyable and have had an impact on his family. Commissioner Lamé noted that on December 20, the Scottsdale Baha'i Community is hosting an event in support of human rights and religious freedom in Iran. Commissioner Jameson reported that he attended the Black Chamber of Commerce Anniversary Dinner. Earlier that day he also attended Joel Martin's Positively Powerful Breakfast. He distributed calendars from the Interfaith Community, identifying holidays from various world traditions.

Commissioner Fox attended the Latin Jazz Festival on Sunday. He felt the layout could have been more compact. The people that were there seemed to be enjoying it. He recommended taking note of this year's mistakes and building on them to make next year's event even better. His company is interested in getting involved in diversity and might be willing to sponsor the right event. He requested an agenda item to discuss how the Commission can connect with the Native American community in Arizona.

9. **Open Call to the Public (A.R.S. § 38-431.02)**

There were no public comments.

10. **Staff Liaison Items**

Ms. Walton reported that Community Celebrating Diversity is looking for table sponsors for the Martin Luther King Dinner. The Commissioners are invited to attend. Chair Simmons highly recommended the event, adding that the community really comes together in recognizing the legacy of Martin Luther King.

Ms. Walton said the Diversity Advisory Committee is distributing their *Sharing the Season* brochure. It explains the various holidays celebrated at this time of the year. She noted that the ADL is putting on a film series called "The Many Faces of Hate." This week's film is *The American Experience in the White Man's Image*. It documents the early efforts of Congress to "civilize" Native Americans. She distributed diversity calendars to the Commission.

January's meeting will focus on electing officers, reviewing the Commission bylaws, and an ethics training refresher.

11. **Adjournment**

With no further business to conduct, the meeting adjourned at 6:49 p.m.

Respectfully submitted:

A/V Tronics, Inc. DBA AVTranz.